

Conflict Resolution



David and Shimei

Have you ever had an individual bent on conflict? No matter what you may do, or not do, there will be no reconciliation. There was one such individual in the life of David name Shimei. Shimei was of the house of king Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. Saul, as you may recall, was the first military king over Israel, in answer to the children of Israel's request for a king like the other nations. As a result of Saul's rebellion, Jehovah determined to place David as king of Israel. This was a displeasure to Saul, as well as his family, save for Jonathan.

When Absalom rose up in rebellion against David, "And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword" (2 Samuel 15:14). "And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow: Jehovah

hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and Jehovah hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and, behold, thou art taken in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood” (2 Samuel 16:5–8). “Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head” (2 Samuel 16:9). To which, David said, “What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? Because he curseth, and because Jehovah hath said unto him, Curse David; who then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, who came forth from my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more may this Benjamite now do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for Jehovah hath bidden him. It may be that Jehovah will look on the wrong done unto me, and that Jehovah will requite me good for his cursing of me this day. So David and his men went by the way; and Shimei went along on the hill-side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust” (2 Samuel 16:10–13). The tolerance of David depicts his patience, and trust in Jehovah. David was not a man who took vengeance for personal onslaughts.

As matters have a way of working themselves out Absalom’s rebellion came to end with his death, upon which occasion David was brought back over the Jordan.

And, lo and behold occasion has it that “And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, who was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went through the Jordan in the presence of the king. And there went over a ferry-boat to bring over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he was come over the Jordan. And he said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king

should take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed Jehovah's anointed? And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel? And the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king swore unto him" (2 Samuel 19:16–23).

As in occasions such as this Shimei's attitude would have remained the same toward David, but nevertheless, David allowed Shimei to live. But that wasn't the end of the matter for David's leniency did not excuse Shimei's actions, the law having said, "Thou shalt not revile God, nor curse a ruler of thy people" (Exodus 22:28).

Although David did not use his position as king to render due justice upon those to whom it was due, "Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I am going the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of Jehovah thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and his testimonies, according to that which is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself; that Jehovah may establish his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel...And, behold, there is with thee Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite, of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by Jehovah, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man; and thou wilt know what thou

oughtest to do unto him, and thou shalt bring his hoar head down to Sheol with blood” (1 Kings 2:1–9).

Thus, “And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, know thou for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants are in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish, to seek his servants; and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not adjure thee by Jehovah, and protest unto thee, saying, Know for certain, that on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The saying that I have heard is good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of Jehovah, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thy heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore Jehovah shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head. But king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before Jehovah for ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out, and fell upon him, so that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon” (1 Kings 2:36–46).

Shimei was only one of four that jeopardized the throne of Solomon, along with Joab the captain of the host, Adonijah Solomon’s brother, and Abiathar the priest. All of which were dispatched, and the resolution final, so as to establish Solomon before Jehovah forever.